



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 104th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 141

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1995

No. 153

Senate

(Legislative day of Monday, September 25, 1995)

The Senate met at 9 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Here is an exciting Biblical promise to start our day:

"God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work".—II Corinthians 9:8.

Gracious Father, we thank You for Your amazing grace, Your unqualified love and forgiveness, and Your limitless strength that flows from Your heart into our hearts, filling up our diminished reserves. It is wonderful to know that You have chosen to be our God and have chosen us to belong first and foremost to You. We clarify our priorities and commit ourselves to seek first Your will and put that above all else. It is liberating to know that You will supply all we need, in all sufficiency, to discern and do what glorifies You. Grant us wisdom, Lord, for the decisions of this day.

We ask this not for our own personal success but for our beloved Nation. America deserves the very best from us today. Experience has taught us that You alone can empower us to be the dynamic leaders America needs. Fill us with a new passion for patriotism and fresh commitment for the responsibilities of leadership You have entrusted to us.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

(Mr. ASHCROFT assumed the chair.)

HISTORIC WHITE HOUSE CEREMONY

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, in the absence of other Senators in the Cham-

ber to debate the motion to proceed, and I know my colleagues will be arriving shortly, I think it appropriate to take a few minutes to comment on a historic ceremony which will take place at the White House at 12 noon today when the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization are scheduled to sign a historic agreement.

I well recall the day, a little over 2 years ago, 2 years and 15 days ago, on September 13, 1993, when Prime Minister Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat signed the initial agreement.

I must say that was a difficult day for me personally to watch Yasser Arafat honored at the White House after the long record of terrorism in which the PLO had engaged, including being implicated in the murder of the charge d'affaires at the United States embassy in the Sudan in 1974, the No. 2 United States official in that country, the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* and the death of Mr. Klinghoffer, and many other acts of terrorism.

It seemed to me, as I think it did to most other Americans, that if Israel—the prime victim of the terrorist attacks by the PLO—through its leaders, Prime Minister Rabin and Foreign Minister Peres, were willing to shake hands with Yasser Arafat under those circumstances, that the United States should do what it could to facilitate the peace process. That is in deference to the leaders of that sovereign state.

I also recall when a letter was circulated on the floor of the U.S. Senate criticizing then Prime Minister Shamir for refusing to give land for peace. I was one who refused to sign that document on the proposition that U.S. Senators thousands of miles away from turmoil ought not to try to influence, let alone dictate, policies to the leaders of other sovereign states under those circumstances.

Now, after very protracted negotiations, we have Prime Minister Rabin

and Foreign Minister Peres and Chairman Arafat coming to the White House today to sign this historic agreement.

During the course of the past several weeks, Senator HANK BROWN of Colorado and I have had occasion to travel, including a trip to the Mideast to talk to the leaders of the nations there. After being there, Mr. President, I have a sense of guarded optimism about the future of peace in the Mideast.

I have traveled into that region extensively, going back to my first trip there in 1964. I do have very substantial reservations as to the adequacy of the PLO, the Palestinian response, and the response of Yasser Arafat to eliminate terrorism in the area.

Last year, Senator SHELBY and I introduced an amendment to the foreign operations bill which would have cut off United States aid if the PLO and Chairman Arafat did not take steps to curtail terrorism, and also to amend the PLO charter to eliminate the provisions which called for the destruction of Israel.

Frankly, Mr. President, I am not satisfied with what Chairman Arafat has done in either regard.

There has been the explanation, really an excuse, that they could not amend the charter because there was not a convening Palestinian authority at that time. Also, Chairman Arafat has said that he has taken certain action to declare those provisions null and void, but I think realistically much more could have been done.

Similarly, on the critical issue of stopping terrorism, I think a great deal more could have been done by Chairman Arafat on that important aspect.

Senator BROWN and I had an opportunity to meet with Chairman Arafat, and we asked him those questions very directly. We asked him why he did not do more to control Hamas, why he did not turn over individuals in the Palestinian group who were suspected of murder.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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